

The Flood of '97.



ordered out by the War Department. Thousands were saved who might have perished from hunger and cold. Nearly 10,000 persons were carried to Memphis alone. Not all the villages, however, are deserted. From some of them, which stand on high ground, and where the water runs through the streets at a depth of only a few feet, none of the residents have departed, but make the best of the situation by playing about in small boats.

Some of the scenes are graphically described by a writer who covered the entire section when the water was at its highest, on a steamer, which made its way slowly over the vast body of water, and stopped wherever human beings were in sight to pick them up. He says:

"In this body of water are occasional spots formed by what under normal conditions are lofty bluffs and high ridges of land. On these are gathered the population for miles about, sleeping and living in the open air or beneath the meager protection of a bit of canvas hoisted above them on strips of lumber or rough driftwood snatched from the encircling waters. Hunger, sickness, privation, loss of life and property abound. Hundreds of these Southern settlers remain in the inundated districts and battle stubbornly with the restless waters, clinging tenaciously to their few belongings, and loth to leave the

places of safety by Mississippi steamboats which pick their way among the tree tops, while other thousands still cling to their homes and refuse to leave. Beds, stoves and other furniture have been carried to the roofs and there these stoical people eat and sleep and sit as the water waits for the waters to fall. In many cases, chickens, pigs and cows are with them on the house-tops. Should the waters rise to where they are encamped these stoical people would build rafts, encamp on them and drift whither the winds and currents carry them. Then, indeed, will the doom list be swelled to appalling figures. But the prospect is not so dismal for the waters are falling.

Though worse may come, existing conditions are bad enough. From Cairo, Ill., to Memphis, a distance of nearly 250 miles, the river is over its banks and the average width of the submerged land is twenty-five miles. It is a long line of blackness and despair, with the surface of the muddy waters covered with floating timbers, wrecked houses, eddies of bloated dead animals, with an occasional lifeless human being mixed with the debris. Here and there is a mound or house-top. On some of the latter are found suffering, half-starved human beings and on the former small groups of shivering animals, wild and tame. It is not an uncommon thing to see cattle, hogs, sheep, cows, rabbits, deer and bears thus herded together.

The Mississippi is a cruel stream and never a spring passes that does not see it leave its banks and overflow the lowlands. These lands are mostly devoted to the cultivation of wheat and corn in the central section and cotton and sugar in Louisiana and Mississippi. Above Memphis there are no levees to speak of. There are a few, but they are as chaff when the big floods come. Tennessee is but little affected even at the highest stages of the river. The banks on the left are high and are supported by rocky hills that creep up almost to the river's edge. The volume of water is therefore thrown with all its terrible force to the unprotected sides of Arkansas' territory, backing up the smaller rivers and streams, causing them to overflow the lakes, thus creating an inland sea that adds new territory to its cruel waste hour by hour until the entire surplus waters of the north have gone to join the salty waves of the southern seas. A few weeks ago the snows began to melt in the Alleghany and Rocky mountains, and this, with the spring rains, caused the little mountain streams to pour great volumes of water into the Missouri, Ohio and Cumberland rivers. These, in turn, swelled the Mississippi into a turbulent torrent, and the waters broke through the levees between Cairo and Memphis and caused a flood greater than has been known in five years.

As soon as the reports reached Memphis and other points, relief boats were sent out to bring the raft-drowned people to places of safety. Government boats were



THE COMING OF THE RELIEF BOAT.

old spots which have become endeared to them.

"Hundreds of others view with indifference the rising waters, and remove from their first floors to second floors, and at last to floating rafts and slowly withdraw to higher points, only to be again pushed back. The apparent indifference of some of these people is astounding. They have always lived in the same spot, and when orders are made to remove them to places of safety, they shake their heads and refuse to be aided. With scraps of corn carefully preserved, and with an occasional rabbit or bird, they eke out a scant existence. To them a place of safety is a strange land in which they have no kindred, and where existence can only be secured by exertion. They have passed through other periods of flood and managed to 'live through it somehow,' and the most graphic description of the horrors to come fails to move them. 'The water will draw bimby,' they say.

"The situation is worst about fifty miles above Memphis. There the water stretches as far as the eye can see. It is nearly forty miles across at this point. Little

the part of the country that lies unprotected, where millions of acres of fertile fields and hundreds of homes belonging to the laboring people are absolutely at the mercy of the remorseless waters.

Sparks from the Wires.

Fire destroyed the Buchanan building at Beaver, Pa. Loss, \$50,000.

An English syndicate is trying to buy seven breweries in Dayton, O., and is said to have secured an option on six of them for \$3,000,000.

Gen. Julio Sanguilly, the American citizen recently released from Moro castle, Cuba, was given a public reception in Philadelphia in the Academy of Music.

A bill to compel respectful treatment for the United States flag was introduced in the House by Representative Howe of New York. It provides that any person in the employ of the Government who shall utter words that reflect or cast re-

spect on the American flag, thereby showing disrespect to the flag and the Government, shall be immediately dismissed from the service.

William Dulles, who for eight years has been treasurer of the Presbyterian Church Board of Foreign Missions, has resigned on account of the excessive strain his work entailed.

The bill to regulate emigration from Germany was referred to a special commission after discussion by the Reichstag at Berlin. Dr. Barth, in speaking of the Government's motives for the bill, held it to be impossible for the Government to direct the stream of emigration at will, and a wrong assumption that emigration should be led away from the United States.

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WHEAT YIELD FOR '96

WORLD'S PRODUCTION IS THE SMALLEST IN SIX YEARS.

Official Estimate Places the Total at 2,428,393,000 Bushels—Statistics of the Secretary of Agriculture Prepared—Corn Crop Breaks Records.

Official Report Given.

According to a report issued by the Secretary of Agriculture, the world's wheat crop for 1896 is 2,428,393,000 bushels. It is the smallest wheat crop in six years. Although the total wheat yield is 118,000,000 bushels less than in 1895, it is larger than earlier estimates indicated. This is largely due to an increase of 59,000,000 bushels in European Russia, as shown in the first estimates of the central statistical bureau over the November estimate of the minister of agriculture of that country.

The report prepared by the Agricultural Department is particularly interesting because it gives the product by countries and continents not only in 1896 but in each year back to and including 1891. This makes a valuable table for dealers who desire to compare the yields year by year. While these figures by countries are not given here, it is possible in brief space to give the recapitulation by continents for these years, and that follows:

1891.

North America .. 689,415,000 579,650,000

South America .. 52,800,000 52,782,000

Europe .. 1,201,732,000 1,410,000,000

Asia .. 407,358,000 559,948,000

Africa .. 47,137,000 39,731,000

Australasia .. 35,875,000 37,696,000

Total .. 2,432,322,000 2,481,806,000

1892.

North America .. 453,782,000 522,550,000

South America .. 81,703,000 104,915,000

Europe .. 1,457,050,000 1,521,028,000

Asia .. 404,378,000 339,297,000

Africa .. 48,842,000 28,498,000

Australasia .. 32,401,000 25,900,000

Total .. 2,562,313,000 2,670,551,000

1893.

North America .. 538,562,000 476,408,000

South America .. 55,000,000 60,000,000

Europe .. 1,457,050,000 1,521,028,000

Asia .. 404,378,000 339,297,000

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It will thus be seen that the crop for 1896 is the smallest for six years. The figures given by the Agricultural Department in these tables are official, either preliminary or final, wherever available. In some important wheat-growing countries, however, official returns of wheat production are not made; in such cases commercial estimates have been used. A table is given showing the disposal of the wheat crop of the United States for 1896. After some explanation regarding the reports of supply and distribution of wheat received by the department the following figures are given:

Reserve in March, 1897. Bushels.

United States, March, 1897 .. 88,000,000

In mills, etc., March, 1897 .. 41,000,000

Visible stock, March, 1897 .. 40,000,000

Aggregate reserve, March, 1897. 169,000,000

Spring and winter seedling, 1896 .. 30,000,000

Export consumption, 1896 .. 310,000,000

Exports, 1896-97 .. 149,000,000

In this computation the amount needed for seed is calculated at one and two-fifths bushels per acre and the food consumption of 71,000,000 inhabitants at four and one-third bushels per annum per capita.

The supply of 173,000,000 bushels will have to meet, before the crop of 1897 comes to re-enforce it about the beginning of July, demands of about 17,000,000 bushels for spring seedling and 104,000,000 bushels for four months' food consumption, at the rates above used. It is quite likely, owing to the increase in the cost of wheat and the further decrease in that of corn, that the rate of wheat consumption per capita may be still further reduced this season, but taking these amounts as they stand, the country is left with a supply of 52,000,000 bushels for export and for balance to be carried over.

The exports for March to June, inclusive, were last year less than 30,000,000 bushels, and they were for the first nine weeks of the present year, notwithstanding the higher price, 50,000,000 bushels per week less than for the corresponding weeks last year. If the same difference holds till July the exports for the four months will be 27,000,000, and the stocks remaining on farms, in mills and "visible" will be 25,000,000 bushels, an exceptionally slender balance.

Enormous Production of Corn.

The corn crop of 1896 in the United States, according to this report, exceeded by more than 6 per cent that of 1895, the largest ever before obtained, in spite of a generally reduced acreage and of a partial failure of the crop in the South, where scarcely a State raised more than enough corn for its own consumption, Texas being the sordest sufferer. The great increases were in the great corn States. The quality of this crop, however, does not correspond to its quantity, for but 84.8 per cent is of this year's merchantable, against 88.1 per cent last year.

The farm value is unprecedentedly low. The average price of the 1,939,206,000 bushels of merchantable corn is but 20.8 cents, against 25.6 cents last year (the lowest previous figures), giving a total value of \$402,064,000, while the unmerchantable, 347,080,000 bushels, at a price of 13.3 cents, against 15.4 cents for 1895, 433,000 bushels last year, is worth at \$40,200,000. The entire crop comes to \$449,276,000, a figure less by \$41,731,000 than that reported in December.

Regarding the report says that the crop of 1896 was generally poor, both in quantity and quality, and the weight per bushel (28.6 pounds on the average) was low. Only three or four States, mostly northwestern, report a good crop.

Mrs. Henry E. Abbey now has handsome apartments in one of the most exclusive neighborhoods of London, where she is keeping house in magnificent style. The report in London is that she is shortly to be married to a wealthy and very prominent member of London's ultra swell set.

The bill to regulate emigration from Germany was referred to a special commission after discussion by the Reichstag at Berlin. Dr. Barth, in speaking of the Government's motives for the bill, held it to be impossible for the Government to direct the stream of emigration at will, and a wrong assumption that emigration should be led away from the United States.

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